

REMARKS / DISCUSSION OF ISSUES

Claims 17-28 and 30-35 are pending in the application. Claims 16 and 29 are canceled herein.

The Office action states that claims 17 and 30 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form, including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Claims 17 and 30 are correspondingly amended herein.

The Office action rejects claims 19, 20, and 26 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over Kubota et al. (USP 5,748,165, hereinafter Kubota). The applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Claims 19, 20, and 26 are dependent upon claim 17, which the Office action has determined to be allowable. The applicants respectfully request the Examiner's reconsideration of the rejection of claims 19, 20, and 26 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over Kubota.

In view of the foregoing, the applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw the objection(s) and/or rejection(s) of record, allow all the pending claims, and find the application to be in condition for allowance. If any points remain in issue that may best be resolved through a personal or telephonic interview, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,



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